



## Economic & International Development Department

### HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

#### FIRST FLOOR, COUNCIL CHAMBERS

CITY 1 BUILDING, 300 N. CAMPBELL STREET

NOVEMBER 2, 2015, 4:00 P.M.

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Tommy Gonzalez

The El Paso Historic Landmark Commission held a public hearing in the First Floor Council Chambers, City 1 Building, 300 N. Campbell Street, November 2, 2015, 4:00 p.m.

The following commissioners were present:

Chairman William Helm

Commissioner Beatriz Lucero

Commissioner Randy Brock

Commissioner Edgar Lopez

Commissioner George Cordova

Commissioner Melinda Becker Skillern

Ms. Velázquez noted Commissioner Cesar Gomez's term as a Historic Landmark Commissioner had expired; therefore, he would not be present for today's meeting.

The following City staff members were present:

Ms. Providencia Velázquez, Historic Preservation Officer, Economic & International Development

Mr. Juan Gonzalez, Assistant City Attorney, City Attorney's Office

Mr. Adam Train, Planner, Historic Preservation Office, Economic & International Development

#### CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Helm called the meeting to order at 4:08 p.m., quorum present.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Chairman Helm asked if there was anyone present who would like to comment on issues not posted on the agenda. There was none.

#### RECUSE

Prior to opening the following agenda item, Chairman Helm announced he and Commissioner Lopez have recused themselves. Mr. Edgar Lopez, architect, in\*situ Architecture, would be presenting this case, along with the property owner, Mr. Greg Kobe, to the commission. Chairman Helm stated Commissioner Randy Brock would be the moderator for this case.

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### Certificate of Appropriateness

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1. **PHAP15-00041:** Being 14 Manhattan Heights 43 to 47, City of El Paso, El Paso County, Texas
- Location: 3101 Federal Avenue
- Historic District: Manhattan Heights
- Property Owner: Trinity Trust
- Representative: Greg and Melissa Kobe
- Representative District: 2
- Existing Zoning: R-3/H (Residential/Historic)
- Year Built: 1922
- Historic Status: Landmark
- Request: Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement of existing metal picket fence w/new iron fence mounted behind concrete base; removal of trees and replacement with shrubs; painting unpainted masonry including keystones, window sills and bands; installation of new iron gate; installation of brick on stucco façade; installation of gravel in parkways; installation of planters; demolition of concrete driveways, porch and steps at entrance and construction of new concrete driveways, modified porch and steps
- Application Filed: 10/19/15
- 45 Day Expiration: 12/3/15

Ms. Velázquez gave a presentation and stated the property owner is requesting a Certificate of Appropriateness for the replacement of existing metal picket fence w/new iron fence mounted behind concrete base; removal of trees and replacement with shrubs; painting unpainted masonry including keystones, window sills and bands; installation of new iron gate; installation of brick on stucco façade; installation of gravel in parkways; installation of planters; demolition of concrete driveways, porch and steps at entrance and construction of new concrete driveways, modified porch and steps.

Ms. Velázquez noted the property is located on the corner of Federal Avenue and San Marcial Street. She showed photos of the property taken circa 1930, at the time the last survey was done in approximately 2000, and recently. The property has been purchased by a family who has done extensive renovations to the interior and exterior of the property.



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Ms. Velázquez highlighted the renovations the property owners are requesting.

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The Historic Preservation Office recommends **APPROVAL WITH MODIFICATIONS** of the proposed scope of work based on the following recommendations:

*The Design Guidelines for El Paso's Historic Districts, Sites, and Properties recommend the following:*

- Construction of new fences, stairs, or sidewalk rails and replacement of older existing fences is allowed on historic properties provided that the proposed site feature is of a compatible material and scale
- The height of the proposed fence should complement the structure (primarily as viewed from the street) and should not obstruct the public's view of the building.
- Retain fences and walls that contribute to the historic character of the property and the district where possible. If replacement is necessary, replacement only the deteriorated element to match the original in dimension, proportion, material, texture, and detail.
- Retain mature trees that contribute to the character of the historic district.
- Replace mature trees with similar canopy and in the same location when they are damaged or diseased. When the same site location is not practical, select a location for replacement trees that will enhance the appearance and character of the historic streetscape or provide shade.



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- *Grass and sod may be removed from parkways provided not more than 50% of the area is covered with gravel or other masonry that is made of impervious materials (brick pavers, gravel, and masonry pavers). The remaining 50% must be covered with trees and living plants that provide ground cover.*
- *Painting or applying coatings such as cement or stucco to exposed masonry/stone is not appropriate, because it will change the historic appearance of the masonry/stone feature, and can accelerate deterioration. Previously painted surfaces that were painted prior to designation or with a permit may remain painted.*
- *It is not appropriate to paint brick stone, copper, bronze, concrete, or cement block surfaces that were historically unpainted.*
- *If it is necessary to replace masonry, always use materials that match the color, size and texture of the masonry being replaced.*
- *A porch and all of its architectural elements should be maintained and repaired. If elements must be replaced, materials should match the original construction. Designs should be innovative and compatible with the building and/or surrounding area.*

*The Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation recommend the following:*

- *New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property.*
- *New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.*
- *Distinctive features, finishes, and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property shall be preserved.*
- *Deteriorated historic features shall be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature shall match the old in design, color, texture, and other visual qualities and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features shall be substantiated by documentary, physical, or pictorial evidence.*

**THE MODIFICATIONS ARE THAT THE UNPAINTED MASONRY REMAIN UNPAINTED; THAT THE PARKWAYS BE PLANTED WITH SHRUBS OR TREES TO MEET THE REQUIREMENT THAT 50% MUST BE COVERED WITH TREES AND LIVING PLANTS THAT PROVIDE GROUND COVER; THAT THE PLANTERS BE REMOVED FROM THE DESIGN AND THAT THE LENGTH OF THE NEW PORCH BE EXTENDED SO THAT IT ENDS AT THE END OF THE SECOND BAY OF WINDOWS ON EITHER SIDE OF THE ENTRANCE; AND THAT THE STUCCO WALL ON THE EASTERN-MOST PORTION OF THE HOUSE NOT BE COVERED WITH BRICK.**

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### FOR THE RECORD

Ms. Velázquez read into the record two letters she received, one from a resident of Manhattan Heights and the other from the President of the Manhattan Heights Neighborhood Association (*copies of letters on file*).

Moderator Brock asked if the representative and property owners were present.

Mr. Edgar Lopez, architect, in\*situ Architecture, representing the property owners, gave a presentation. Mr. Lopez noted everything about this historic structure is symmetrical. One of the renovations proposed by the property owners is to reduce the size of the front porch. Mr. Lopez explained he would reduce the size of the porch; however, add planters on each side, reaching the distance to the second window. This will give the impression that a structure exists, not a porch but a planter.

The reason why the size of the porch is reduced is due to the very poor condition of the porch bricks, not only in the mortar but in the brick itself. Originally, the property owners requested the porch be repaired, Mr. Lopez did not want to put stucco on that porch. The original material used to construct the porch is brick and due to the lack of sufficient brick, the size of the porch would be reduced.

Mr. Lopez stated his desire today is to address the concerns of the HLC, especially Ms. Velázquez's request to reduce the amount of brick for the pergola that has been filled in that is located on the east side of the structure. He explained in the event there is not enough brick to cover the façade, he will have to paint the stucco but brick is more durable and would match the house.

Regarding the pergola, Mr. Lopez explained, the pergola is not on the same plane as the house, it is recessed a little; therefore, there is going to be a shadow line. The shadow line will make a difference with regard to the structure; additionally, there will be a white line noting the downspout.

Regarding the keystones, windowsills and bands, Mr. Lopez is aware these character-defining features were never painted; however, there are homes in the historic district with painted keystones and windowsills. Mr. Lopez stated that painting the keystones and windowsills will enhance the look of the house.

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Regarding the landscaping, Mr. Lopez explained it will not be artificial turf but low water consumption grass inside the property. For the parkway, the property owners would like to have Franklin Red Chat groundcover. Should commissioners want to add plantings, he would be willing to install small trees or low water consumption shrubs. The trees on the west side of the house are so close that the roots are lifting the foundation. Normally trees are planted 30 feet away from any structure but these trees are less than three inches.

Mr. Lopez noted he planned to replace the trees with small shrubs such as rosemary or any shrub that is low maintenance and native to this region.

The property owners have hired a number of professionals to assist them in restoring this historic structure to its original or better state. The structure had been vacant and left to disrepair for some time.

Regarding the side porch columns, one of the columns is missing. Mr. Lopez explained how he would rebuild the missing column and ensure all columns were symmetrical.

Regarding the high metal picket fence, Mr. Lopez explained the high metal picket fence would be the exact same as the existing but with a new foundation relocated several inches behind the existing low retaining wall. Due to lack of maintenance and neglect, the high iron fence is rusting and cracking the retaining wall. He stated moving the retaining wall several inches back should elevate the rusting and cracking issue in the future.

At this time, Mr. Lopez showed commissioners a brick to highlight the proposed colors for the bands, sills, and keystones. He would try to match the existing mortar. For the base of the house and the planter, he plans to paint them the same color as the brick so everything looks together.

No questions for Mr. Lopez from commissioners.

Moderator Brock asked if members of the public wished to comment on the request.

The following members of the public commented:

1. Ms. Jackie Stagen; and
2. Mr. Gilbert Cordova

Mr. Lopez and Mr. Kobe responded to comments and questions from Ms. Stagen and Mr. Cordova. To assist explaining the proposed renovations to Mr. Cordova, Mr. Lopez referred to the drawings submitted with the request.



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Moderator Brock closed the discussion to commissioners.

Commissioner Lucero asked Ms. Velázquez if she was agreeable with the painting of the keystones, sills, etc.

Ms. Velázquez replied her recommendation still stands; if they were meant to be painted, they would have been painted. Once you start painting unpainted masonry this creates a maintenance problem for the property owner and if you lapse in the upkeep the structure starts to look bad. Additionally, as this is a historic district so setting a precedent is not advised.

Commissioner Lucero clarified Ms. Velázquez was opposed to painting the keystones, sills and bands, and that the stucco wall not be covered in brick, and that the color of the stucco wall stay white.

Ms. Velázquez responded my recommendations have not changed. Regarding the color of the stucco wall, she left that decision to commissioners.

Moderator Brock asked Mr. Lopez if he had any issues with Ms. Velázquez's recommendations.

Mr. Lopez responded no, we agreed to consider painting the side porch instead of brick because we will probably not have enough brick. Regarding painting the keystones, sills, and bands, we would like to paint them but if that is not possible, there is no problem.

Mr. Kobe respectfully requested bricking the sidewall, then painting yellow over the bricks. Regarding painting the keystones, sills, and bands, Mr. Kobe understood the concern about painting concrete and losing the historic perspective. He felt that painting the keystones would not impact the historic aspect of the home; additionally, he thought painting the keystones brought out the historic look of the home.

Chairman Helm noted one of Ms. Velázquez's recommendations is that the planters be removed from the design. He asked Mr. Lopez if that would be an issue due to the amount of brick leftover after the bricks are rebuilt.

Mr. Lopez replied yes; however, he thought that was the best solution because, due to the lack of brick, the planters might not even reach to the side. Our solution is to create these planters and to replace the porch, because the planters have the same length and proportion of the original porch with planters. Should commissioners request he replace the porch to the same proportions, it would probably have to be done in another material.



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Chairman Helm asked Ms. Velázquez to show the photos of the porch where the walls were falling down.

Regarding the stairs and the porch, Mr. Kobe explained, a structural engineer's report shows they have just deteriorated. Secondly, the porch steps were not built to code; the height and the width are not per code themselves. Mr. Kobe noted the top caps will be used for the new porch. We are trying to use as much of the brick, both sides, even though the extent of the deterioration is significant.

Mr. Lopez clarified the only brick we are demolishing is the brick on the porch – no renovations are affecting the rear of the structure at this time.

Mr. Cordova, public, asked for clarification regarding the application process. He asked if this was a preliminary meeting, what the next step after this will be and will the final meeting be in December ...

Ms. Velázquez responded no, this is *the* meeting. Commissioners will make their decision today to either to approve as is, approve with modification(s), or to deny, that's it.

Moderator Brock asked if commissioners had any further discussion.

Commissioner Lucero stated she agreed with Ms. Velázquez's modifications to include not painting the keystones, sills and bands. Regarding changing the color of the stucco from white to yellow, Ms. Velázquez was not opposed to either color.

### **MOTION:**

*Motion made by Commissioner Lucero, seconded by Commissioner Cordova AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE THIS WITH THE MODIFICATIONS AS PRESENTED AND WITH THE ADDITIONAL MODIFICATION THAT WE LOOK AT THE STUCCO BEING YELLOW.*

**AYES:** *Commissioner Lucero, Commissioner Cordova, Commissioner Skillern and Moderator Brock*

**NAYS:** *None*

**ABSTAINED:** *Chairman Helm and Commissioner Lopez*

*Motion passed. (4-0)*





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2. Addresses of property HLC commissioners have requested that HLC staff review or investigate and provide a report to the HLC. If no addresses are submitted in advance and listed under this agenda item, commissioners may announce such addresses under this agenda item. Discussion on property announced at this meeting will take place during the next regularly scheduled meeting. November 2, 2015 deadline for HLC members to request for agenda items to be scheduled for the November 16, 2015 meeting. November 16, 2015 deadline for HLC members to request for agenda items to be schedule for the December 7, 2015 meeting.

*No address requests from commissioners for staff to review or investigate.*

### HLC Staff Report

3. Update on Administrative Review Cases since the last HLC meeting for the properties listed on the attachment posted with this agenda. (See Attachment "A")

*No comment from commissioners.*

### **MOTION:**

*Motion made by Commissioner Lucero, seconded by Commissioner Cordova AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE THE HLC STAFF REPORT.*

### Other Business – Discussion and Action

4. Approval of Regular Meeting Minutes for October 12, 2015

Ms. Velázquez noted the October 12<sup>th</sup> meeting minutes were under review. The Regular Meeting Minutes for October 12, 2015 were postponed to the November 16<sup>th</sup> HLC meeting.

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### **MOTION:**

*Motion made by Chairman Helm, seconded by Commissioner Brock AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 4:58 P.M.*